

Hymnology of the  
Reformed Dutch church

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Reformed church in America  
Hymnology



## The Christian Intelligencer

July 4, 1906.

### Origin of the Hymnody of the Reformed Dutch Church

BY JOHN BODINE THOMPSON, D.D.

THE Hebrew Psalms are so called because they were sung to the music of the *Psaltery*. The Greek translators called them also hymns because they were sung to the praise of Jehovah. So Augustine defines a hymn as "praise to God with song." As a recent writer puts it, "Hymn-singing is a devotional approach to God in our emotions."

Three facts may be regarded and treated as axioms of hymnody: That a certain specific arrangement of tones with specifically differing intervals constitutes a musical scale, that expression intensifies emotion, and that man becomes like the being he worships. Worship is the expression of proper emotion toward God; and the more nearly complete the expression, the more effective and acceptable the worship. If the expression be in both the language of the intellect and the language of the emotions, in both words and music, development Godward is thereby doubly promoted.

Words give expression to both thought and feeling. If they be rhythmically arranged they constitute poetry. The rhythmical expression of melodious sounds is music. Music can suggest thought, but cannot express it. It can, however, express emotion beyond the utmost power of words to utter. It is only when emotion has curdled into thought that it can find even partial expression in words.

As music is superior, on the one hand, to poetry with regard to emotion generally, so is it superior, on the other hand, to painting with regard to devotion specially. Painting concerns itself chiefly with the outer world of sense; music with the inner world of spirit. Painting speaks to us through the eye; music through the ear. The former can promote human progress; the latter, personal piety. "Faith cometh by hearing."

With this may be compared the teaching of Aristotle that the visible is a sign for the intellect; but the audible produces conformity of character. This is not to disparage the sense of sight through which chiefly knowledge enters into the soul, but to indicate simply one respect in which hearing is superior to it. Painting and poetry and music all develop the appreciation of the beautiful. Beauty includes three elements, and the predominance of one or the

other of these causes it to be called either physical beauty, intellectual beauty, or moral beauty, the last of course being superior in value to both the others. So the prophet, extolling Jehovah, mentions first the manifestations of his power and goodness in bringing blessing to his people and then, naming the chief of his moral perfections, includes all his perfections in the culminating clause of the rapturous ejaculation:

How great is His goodness,  
And how great is His beauty!

God is the sum and source of all beauty, and He has given beauty to his world in order that by the study thereof we may in this respect also be developed toward him.

The first Christian hymns were the Hebrew Psalms. They were sung to the tunes with which they are still printed, "the accents" being also musical notes. Many of these tunes were at first popular melodies, as the titles indicate, but the "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" of the Colossians and Ephesians and Bithynians must have been sung to Greek music with its many modes or scales, each expressing its own peculiar kind of emotion. The Phrygian mode was enthusiastic, the Ionian gay, the Lydian sensuous, and the Dorian solemn. Seven other modes are mentioned by ancient writers.

Before the Reformation the service of song in the House of the Lord was restricted (doubtless for the sake of decorum) to the clergy, by whom it was rendered in an unknown tongue. Luther was the first to restore this part of public worship to the people. His psalmbook was published in 1522; Calvin's in 1538. The Geneva Psalmbook (prepared under Calvin's direction) became the model for those of the other Reformed churches. The Psalms were versified in French by Clement Marot and Theodore Beza. The tunes were furnished by Louis Bourgeois and Pierre



Dagues, mostly from popular melodies. They were afterwards harmonized and arranged by Claude Goudimel and Claude Le Jeune.

No other psalmbook has ever aroused so much enthusiasm as this. It was with these psalms and tunes that the Huguenots enlivened their homes, rushed into battle, cheered their prison cells, and triumphed at the stake.

As early as 1539 license was granted to Simon Cock to print a version of the Psalms in Flemish verse, and it was printed the next year at Antwerp with music from familiar ballads. But it never attained the popularity of Tilman Susato's versification in Dutch, issued also in 1540 at Antorf.

The first Reformed Dutch church in the world was organized among the refugees in London in 1548 and a metrical version of the Psalms in their own tongue was provided for them by John Uytenhoven of Ghent, who was there, assisting Cranmer in the reformation of the English Church. I do not know how much he was indebted (if at all) to Susato's *Souter Liedekens* (psalm songs); but these psalms prepared by Uytenhoven were sung by the Netherland churches "Under the Cross." They did not, however, awaken the enthusiasm produced by the Huguenot version.

In 1565, therefore, Peter Dathen translated the Geneva psalmbook into Dutch, preserving the metres and transferring the melodies. This translation was endorsed by the Synod of Wesel, and "entered into the very flesh and blood of the Reformed Netherlanders." In 1573 Ambrose Lobwasser translated the Geneva Psalmbook into German, "preserving the metres and transferring the melodies" as Dathen had done, and these tunes sung to the same psalms in the various languages constituted for centuries a band of brotherhood among the Reformed churches throughout the world.

In 1619 Professor Dathen's translation of the Genevan Psalm-book was approved by the Synod of Dort and it was used by the Reformed Dutch churches everywhere. Tamils and Malays sang its songs in their own tongues, and it was in common use in America until the Dutch language gave place to the English a hundred years after New Netherland became New York and New Jersey.

Then the Consistory of the Church in New York imported type from the fatherland, and employed Francis Hopkinson, the eminent *littérateur* (who afterward was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence from New Jersey), to prepare a version of the psalms "in the same manner as they are versified in Low Dutch," yet "according to the genius of the English tongue." A letter from him shows that he performed this difficult task "to the great satisfaction of the Dutch congregation." They paid him for his services a hundred and forty-five pounds. The book was issued with the explanation that it "is greatly indebted to that of Dr. Brady and Mr. Tate, some of the psalms being transcribed *verbatim* from their version, and others altered so as to fit them to the music used in the Dutch churches." It was conformed to the rule of the Synod of Dort and was adopted by all the Dutch churches in America which used the English language.

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# The Christian Intelligencer

July 11, 1906.

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## The First Psalm Book of the Reformed Dutch Church in America

BY JOHN BODINE THOMPSON, D.D.

### II.

ON this side of the ocean The General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church in America succeeded to the authority of the Synod of Dort, and determined upon "A new version out of other collections of English psalms in repute and received in the Reformed Churches." The work was entrusted to a committee consisting of the ministers: John H. Livingston, Eilardus Westerlo, William Linn, James R. Hardenbergh, Dirck Romeyn, Solomon Froeligh and Isaac Blauvelt. They were instructed to select only "From the book of the New York congregation, from Tate and Brady, and from Dr. Watts," unless it should be necessary for the sake of Orthodoxy to seek some other source.

An American edition of Tate and Brady's version had been published in 1741. From it the psalms in use in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States were taken. In 1741 also was published in America an edition of Dr. Watts's "Psalms of David, imitated in the language of the New Testament." The work was accurately described by its title. While it was in progress, Dr. Watts wrote to Cotton Mather: "It is not a translation of David that I pretend, but an imitation of him so nearly in Christian hymns that the Jewish psalmist may plainly appear, yet leave Judaism behind." From that day to this the distinction between English psalms and hymns has been a distinction without a difference, though the Biblical psalms are, of course, the normative of all Christian hymns.

The churches, however, could no longer be restricted to even a Christianized version of the Jewish psalm book, and the committee was instructed to add "Some well composed spiritual hymns." Copies of the hymns they selected seem to have been submitted to the succeeding session of Synod, but not the whole book, the committee explaining that it was "in press." However, the Synod of 1789 perceived "with much satisfaction that the English psalms, together with the selection of hymns formerly approved by Synodical decrees have been happily committed to the press and are printed and already in use in many congregations." The hymns had been selected and arranged for the purpose of conveying doctrinal instruction. The first began with the stanza:

Substantial comfort will not grow  
In Nature's barren soil;  
All we can boast till Christ we know  
Is vanity and toil.

I fear it is now too late to hope to discover the author of this and other instructive hymns written apparently for this book. Numbers 1 to 52 were arranged according to the sections of the Heidelberg catechism that they might be easily found for singing consecutively in connection with the exposition of the catechism on the fifty-two Lord's Days of the year. Numbers 53 to 73 were intended for use at the Lord's Supper, and numbers 74 to 100 were miscellaneous. This book was enlarged in 1812 and again in 1830. The first enlargement was made on the petition of the Classis of New York referred to General Synod by the Particular Synod of New York. At the request of Synod, Dr. Livingston selected 173 hymns, which were added to those already in use. To this book Dr. Livingston's portrait was prefixed. The second enlargement consisted of 172 hymns selected by Dr. Thomas DeWitt, chairman of a committee appointed for that purpose. These were called "Book II.," the preceding addition being now named "Book I." The book thus enlarged was approved by the Synod of 1831.

From the beginning the Reformed Churches had protested against the doctrine that "ignorance is the mother of devotion," and had endeavored to induce their adherents to

learn to read. But in America they had not taken pains to cultivate music, the language of the emotions, though, for the purpose of promoting the piety of their adherents, the Reformers had given quite as much attention to music as to reading. For centuries music had been one of the seven studies constituting the curriculum of every university in Europe; but the limitations of life in a new land prevented the settlers from giving it its proper place in either the colleges or the churches established in the wilderness. Only very recently has it been introduced into the curriculum of American universities, and however pleasing it may be, can hardly be regarded nowadays as a "help to devotion." The struggle for existence in a new country left little leisure for learning to sing. The consequence was an increasing degeneracy in this respect. Generation after generation grew up with little ability to participate thus in divine worship, and content to be hearers only. Not understanding how the practice of worship, both in public and in private, was thus hindered by lack of ability to sing (without which in this busy day divine contemplation has well-nigh ceased), a condition ensued which there is still deep reason to deplore.

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# The Christian Intelligencer

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July 18, 1906.

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## The Book of Psalms and Hymns of the R. P. D. Church in America

### III.

BY JOHN BODINE THOMPSON, D.D.

THE extensive revivals of religion which occurred between 1720 and 1740 and again between 1820 and 1840 were accompanied and followed by an awakening also to the importance of sacred music. An appeal for help went up to the General Synod of 1836, and another to that of 1837. But it was not clear what could be done. In 1840, however, Synod threw the responsibility on the Classes and urged upon them "attention to sacred music in order to elevate its standard in their respective churches." It also advised "the introduction of music in the district schools." This was probably the first recognition by any religious organization in America of the Pestalozzian educational movement based upon the fact that children are even more susceptible than adults to the influence of music (as every mother knows who sings her child to sleep). Two years later Synod appointed a committee to prepare a hymnbook for Sunday schools under its care. In 1843 the Chairman Rev. Dr. John P. Knox reported a book of 331 hymns entitled "Sabbath School and Social Hymns of the Reformed Dutch Church." It was not until 1862 that it went so far as formally to advise "the introduction of music in the district schools."

In 1845 the Synod, remembering that the church in the house is also the church, and that in many houses the Psalmbook contained the only poetry (or, at least the only religious poetry) to which the members of the family had access, declared its conviction that "the selection of a

sound, vigorous and Christian literature for our youth is an enterprise of the highest importance and one in which all our ministers, elders, and churches should co-operate." To facilitate this, Synod appointed a committee to prepare a Psalmbook "with the addition of such new hymns as may make the collection more complete." The committee consisted of the Rev. Drs. Isaac Ferris, Thomas DeWitt, and Thomas M. Strong, with the Elders John D. Kesse and William Woram. The next year they reported 348 additional hymns properly digested with those already in use, making a total of 1,009 hymns besides the 171 Psalms and their "parts." Among these were many new and excellent hymns. The arrangement was more nearly that of the Westminster than of the Heidelbergh Catechism. The additional hymns were printed separately also, and the approval of Synod was heartily given.

The sciolistic clamor for "the original form" had not yet arisen, and the good judgment of the editors was shown, for example, in adopting Montgomery's condensation of Toplady's "Rock of Ages" into three six-line stanzas; which none of their successors have ventured to do, though none of them have had the hardihood to restore *all* the crudities of the original. This collection was so large that Synod allowed it to be published without any doctrinal appendix, the committee explaining that they had "endeavored to make the *poetical liturgy* of the church complete."

At the next session of Synod objection was made to this book by the Classis of Bergen and the North Classis of Long Island that it included "ninety preaching hymns," "hymns of praise to dead saints," and "heretical expressions," as well as "mixture of metaphor" and "nonsense," and that still other hymns were "not devotional." In so large a book there might be ground for some of these objections. Two or three of them were frankly admitted, and alterations made. Others were shown to be overstated, and explanations were given. At its next session, on request of the Classis of Orange, Synod voted to allow also "an edition of the former Book of Psalms and Hymns as the same was in use in the church previous to the Synod of 1847." It seems that with this action all were satisfied.



In 1856 the Board of Publication, following a Scottish precedent, issued an edition of the Psalms and hymns with a little book of tunes bound within the same covers at the top; but this book proved to be too large for convenience.

In 1858 Synod gave the Classes permission to receive churches desiring to continue the use of the Scottish version of the Psalms.

During the nineteenth century there was great development in both literature and music. Excellent translations of hymns and new hymns of equal excellence were added to the stores of English literature. Music was commonly written in four parts. The best tunes were derived from the works of the Great Masters. But only small portions of these were available for popular use. Under inspiration differing from that of the Masters only in degree others composed tunes which expressed the sentiment of the words to which they were set in such musical language as could be "understood of the people."

"Hold the Fort for I am Coming" may serve as an illustration. This spiritual song was based upon the message sent during the Civil War from the top of Mount Kenesaw to Allatoona, whose garrison, thus encouraged, held the fort until deliverance came.

As this statement has been disputed, I insert here part of an autograph letter in my possession:

Headquarters Army of the United States.  
St. Louis, Mo., June 22, 1875.

John B. Thompson, Catskill, N. Y.

My Dear Sir: I am just back from Boston and find your letter of June 12 with enclosures, and was glad to learn for the first time that one of the hymns of Messrs. Moody and Sankey of London was founded on the defence of Allatoona. You will find the incident described in full in the memoirs of General W. T. Sherman, Vol. II, in the chapter "Pursuit of Hood," October, 1874. (Of course it should be 1864.) Allatoona was held by a small garrison, was important, and I was marching to its relief. The enemy had got there first with a superior force, and had cut all the telegraph lines. I got on the top of Kenesaw, eighteen miles distant, from which we could see faintly the assault, but were still too far off to be felt; but I telegraphed the fact of our coming, by signal flag. I don't think I used the words "Hold the fort." That, however, was the duty of the garrison, and they did it manfully. Truly your friend,

W. T. SHERMAN, General

Reading of this incident, the late Philip Paul Bliss (to whom earth was a parable of heaven) was moved to write the hymn and tune which were soon sung round the world.



It is not a great hymn, nor a great tune; but it has done great good. In this connection the following letter will be of interest:

CHICAGO, 30th June, 1875.

Dear Sir and Brother: Yours with the complimentary superscription came directly. The Lord be praised for the closing paragraph, "100 recent converts." I rejoice with you for them. You may not get this in time for Sunday, but I'd like to have "Hold the Fort" sung, especially for young Christians.

The Lord gave the song, words and music, July 1 to 6, 1870, while I was busy with preparing my first book, "The Charm." The words entire, and the chorus of the music, came first to me, suggested by an army incident where the commander signalled across the valley, over the heads of the enemy, the message, "Hold the fort, I am coming." The fort was held against a foe greatly outnumbering them. And so our Commander says to us, "I will come again," "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"; "Hold that fast which thou hast."

Brother Sankey has sent me a copy of the song translated into German. It has also been used in India and Africa, I am told. May the Lord continue to bless it by using it for His glory, and may those who sing and hear it be made more watchful till He comes.

Yours in Him,

P. P. BLISS.

It will be remembered that this "man greatly beloved" held the fort even to the death at Ashtabula, where, in order to rescue his wife, he re-entered the car which proved to be the chariot of fire by means of which they both went up into heaven, December 29, 1876.

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# The Christian Intelligencer

July 25, 1906.

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## "Hymns of the Church," Etc.

BY JOHN BODINE THOMPSON, D.D.

### IV.

THE Reformed Church in America had never had a book of English hymns set to music. Individuals in other denominations had attempted to make such books. As early as 1810 Samuel Holyoke had printed the "Columbian Repository," in which he achieved the prodigious task of fitting a different tune to every one of Watt's hymns. About the middle of the century several books of more convenient size appeared with hymns and tunes on the same page, most of them prepared for private gain, and therefore rather below than above the average taste and intellect, as all books of this kind must be, for pecuniary profit. One or two of the congregations in the Reformed Church ventured, in spite of the constitutional law, to introduce such books; but the result was unsatisfactory. Generally the music was too poor to please those who could sing or to induce those who could *not* sing to try to learn. And the hymns were as common-place as the tunes. Meanwhile the Church was growing restless. Several ministers (without knowledge of each others movements) began to make collections. Consistories took pains to establish singing classes for both adults and children. It seemed as if we might be on the verge of another era. The time was ripe for a new departure and the occasion was not far to seek.

The Synod of 1868 met in Hudson, N. Y. Thither came the Rev. Dr. Zachary Eddy, pastor of the Church on the Heights in Brooklyn, with 119 hymns selected by him.

His design was to make a book for use in the South Classis of Long Island. That Classis had approved the project and now sent him to Synod to secure its consent to the plan. One of the members of this Synod was the Rev. John Bodine Thompson, pastor of the Old Dutch Church of Sleepy Hollow at Tarrytown. He brought to Synod 131 hymns which he had selected. At his suggestion Dr. Eddy added these to his, and asked the approval of the whole 250 by Synod. The request was referred to a special committee of which Mr. Thompson was chairman. Collections of hymns made by the Rev. Drs. Rufus W. Clark and Anson Du Bois were also presented to Synod and referred to the same committee. From the four collections thus submitted they selected 350 hymns and advised the making of a book of hymns and tunes for the whole Church. The report was adopted and the work entrusted to a committee of which Mr. Thompson was made chairman. The other members were the Rev. Drs. Ashbel Green Vermilye, of Utica, and Alexander Ramsay Thompson, of New York City.

This "Committee on Hymnology," as it was called, planned to issue three books for use respectively, in church, prayer-meetings, and Sunday-schools. The first they decided to call "Hymns of the Church." In the preparation of this they requested and obtained the hearty and constant co-operation of the Rev. Dr. Eddy. At the request of the committee, and to supply a felt need, he wrote hymn 229:

Jesus, enthroned and glorified  
At Thy Almighty Father's side,  
Thy people's prayer inspire!  
Thou art alive forevermore;  
Oh then on us Thy spirit pour;  
Baptize us now with fire!

The need for good tunes was even greater than that for hymns. The work of the musical editor whom Dr. Eddy had partially engaged was not satisfactory and Mr. Uzziah C. Burnap, organist of the Church on the Heights, was selected in his stead. He discharged his duties acceptably, under the supervision, chiefly, of Drs. Eddy and Alexander R. Thompson, who were both singers.

Forty chants were added to the book in hope that the many who from lack of early culture were unable to sing the tunes in common use might be induced to join in the *recitative* still in vogue in the Protestant Episcopal Church. But it seems impossible to induce those accustomed to the melodies and harmonies of modern lyrical song to revert to the cantillation of prose (or of prosaic verse), though the atavistic endeavor still continues.

The publishing house with which Dr. Eddy had been negotiating readily undertook the publication and made the mechanical part of the work as great an advance on any of its predecessors as were the literary and musical parts. The book was not published until it had been submitted to the Synod of 1869, by which it was recommended to "All churches, families and individuals within their communion." The book was too large, but, nevertheless, Synod insisted upon binding within the same covers the liturgy and doctrinal standards. The arrangement, as usual, indicated the progress of doctrine. It was not conformed to either of the Catechisms; yet it was doctrinal. Beginning with the persons of the Trinity, it included under the heading, "The Holy Spirit," hymns of the Christian life, followed these with hymns on the Church and its institutions, on missions, and for other acts and occasions of special worship.

Perhaps this book was too good. Perhaps the literary and musical standards were both too high. Perhaps it followed ancient usage too closely. The committee had desired that it should have an educational value also; and in this they were not disappointed. It had an elevating effect. A few years' experience, however, showed that a hundred of the tunes were too difficult for use in many congregations. On conference with a committee of Synod appointed for the purpose, simpler tunes were substituted. A considerable number of the hymns also were scarcely suited to the need of the average worshipper; but change in them was thought impracticable.

In their report to Synod the committee on Hymnology had said: "Several congregations of Presbyterian, Congre-

gational, and other denominations are preparing to introduce the book at once." Not long after, however, these congregations adopted other books issued by the same publishers. The book was a collection, rather than a selection. It included all the hymns desired by the editors and by those in whose taste they had confidence. When they first sat down together to examine the 1,180 numbers of the collection then in use they found but 324 which any of them ever had, or ever would have, sung in public worship; yet they made a collection which reached 1,007 numbers! "Hymns Ancient and Modern" had but 400 numbers and was selling at the rate of a million a year. The largest Presbyterian church in New York City had used only 383 hymns in seven years, and only 288 of these more than once.

Study of such facts warranted the conclusion that the divine plan for development Godward had been misapprehended. Too much pains had been taken to conserve, not only the ends, but also the methods of procedure of past ages. There seemed to be now a desire for hymns and tunes which should express devotional feeling unhindered by the inclusion of so large a proportion of information, merely. Instruction was to be expected from the pulpit rather than from the choir. The best Christian culture no longer desired to worship in public by the use of hymns chiefly didactic, dogmatic, descriptive, hortatory, introspective or eulogistic of individuals or institutions. It was against such hymns that the Classis of Bergen and the North Classis of Long Island had remonstrated twenty years before.

Moreover, it was now becoming clear that only the poetry called "lyrical" is appropriate for musical expression, as indeed, the adjective "lyrical" indicates. Lyrical poetry is more emotional than any other. In its loftiest flights it is almost as emotional and vague as music. In its highest strains the thought is scarcely distinguishable from the form. This may be noticed especially in the snatches of music used by Shakespeare. Sometimes the whole instruc-



tion of the play is summed up emotionally in a half dozen lines of lyrical verse. The emotion has become so intense that it can find adequate expression only in the terms of music. The language of the intellect fails. Only that of the emotions is available. The most intelligent Christians have arrived at Augustine's definition, and desire to sing only (or chiefly at least) hymns of *praise*. Indeed, what we call psalms the Royal Psalmist himself calls praises (*t'Hilloth*).

And a mere concourse of sweet sounds no longer suffices for worship. Knowledge and experience have combined to produce desire that the music should express the same kind of emotion as the words, and not a merely similar emotion of another quality. There are indications that we may be at the beginning of a stage of progress which shall some day issue in a distinction between different kinds of music as definite as that of the ancient Greeks, and in the recognition of a mode impossible in any Pagan cultus. People are beginning to distinguish between music that is merely or chiefly sentimental and that which, positively devotional, lifts the soul directly toward God.

So long ago as 1637 the Rev. Henry Sydenham, of London, preaching on this subject, said: "There is nothing more betraying us to sensuality than some kinds of music; than others none more advancing us to God." Dryden's "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" teaches the same truth; which is illustrated, also, by Tolstoi in one of his *brochures*. Yet organists and choirs and hymn-book makers mostly seem in utter ignorance of these important distinctions! More than half a century ago Richard Storrs Willis, returning from the funeral of his child, saw her little shoe lying near the piano, sat down and assuaged his grief by singing an *impromptu* song "To My Baby's Shoe." After his death a young musician read the score, harmonized it, and set it to the words of a hymn in a book he was preparing, crediting it to himself! It is pretty, and plaintive and popular, because sentimental. But it is not devotional! And many people think they are de-



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votional when they are only sentimental! Hence the popularity of many modern hymn and tune books.

In 1871 the committee on Hymnology submitted to Synod proof sheets of a book entitled "Hymns of Prayer and Praise." As Hymns of the Church was the first, so this was the second book with tunes authorized by General Synod. It was printed by the publishers of Hymns of the Church in the same handsome style. The care of seeing both these books through the press devolved very largely upon the Rev. Dr. Alexander R. Thompson, who was easy of access from the office of the printer. His time and talent were given to the work ungrudgingly and without restraint. His thoroughly refined tastes gave him a strongly liturgical tendency. He was urgent that "Hymns of Prayer and Praise" should be arranged in the order of "The Church Year." Dr. Vermilye objected. Eventually the suggestion of the chairman was adopted, and the arrangement was that of events in the life of Christ. But this was hardly a *Via Media*. However, the book had an educational value. Churches also in other denominations who desired a better class of hymns and tunes than were common in prayer meetings used it. Several years afterward it was unexpectedly found in use also on the Pacific coast.

When it was about ready for the press the chairman (because of absence from the country) withdrew from the committee, and the proposed Sunday-school book was never completed, though the material had been approved by the Synod of 1870. Dr. Vermilye succeeded to the chairmanship and the committee continued to pay the royalty into the treasury of Synod until discharged at its own request in 1885.

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# The Christian Intelligencer

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August 8, 1906.

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## "Christian Praise"

BY JOHN BODINE THOMPSON, D.D.

### V.

**A**FTER the publication of Hymns of the Church the members of the committee which prepared it were annoyed because it was not pushed among the Presbyterian Churches also where it was desired by some pastors, and where it was hoped it might also have an educative influence. They recognized also that it was too large; and the chairman of the committee determined to make a book on a different plan. The plan would make it a small book. It might be an unpopular book. But it would suit those like minded with the compiler. It could not be used in the Reformed Churches; but the Presbyterian churches were without restraint upon their hymnody—and some of them might want it.

William Hinchman Platt was an elder in the First Church of Tarrytown, a man of refined taste as well as of both literary and musical culture. He had had experience also as an instructor and leader of choirs in both large and small churches in the country and in the city. He and his pastor held the same opinions, and together they made the book, described by its title, "Christian Praise." The title was chosen by Mr. Platt, who so clearly recognized the fact that what is sung in churches should be *praise*, and that of a specifically *Christian* character. The arrangement was not doctrinal but devotional. The metres were separate, and the style in each passed gradually from the grave and dignified to the more emotional and varied.

Hymns and tunes alike were chosen to express and incite and develop Christian feeling. The musical language and the literary language were upon opposite pages, allowing a choice of either of three tunes, each expressing in its own way the emotion of the hymns opposite. For, however true it may be that only one tune can be the perfect expression of the thought of a hymn as it lay in the mind of the author, it is also true that each worshipper has his own conception of that meaning and is entitled to the privilege of expressing it in appropriate music within his power to execute.

The directions for the use of the book said: "If the object be to impress the feelings and prepare for acts of worship, one of the special adaptations or one of the tunes of the higher and more difficult style may be sung by the trained choir. If the object be to express the feelings in direct acts of worship, one of the simpler tunes in which all can join should be used. The book is specially designed for this end, while fostering progress also in the appreciation of musical language." The very different tunes "Metuchen" and "Mine Forever," composed for this work by the musical editor, illustrate the views with which it was prepared.

In concession to custom, as many as 454 hymns were included, and a full topical index of first lines (with the names of the tunes) afforded facilities for those who still might choose to select hymns chiefly for the enforcement of doctrine. The introduction was written by the Rev. Dr. Roswell C. Hitchcock, who had "long entertained the views underlying this work" and was now "glad to see them so happily carried out." With such endorsement the book sold, not only on the Atlantic coast, but also beyond the Mississippi. Baptist churches demanded an edition for their use, and of this there were issued also large paper copies, now rare.

The compilers (who owned the copyright) kept it out of the Reformed churches until, on the death of the publisher, the plates were purchased by the Board of Publication, at whose request the book was approved and recommended for use in the churches by the General Synod of 1879. To

Not in  
1870  
Edn

this edition were appended (at the request of the Board) 126 miscellaneous hymns and tunes for social worship. The interest of the musical editor was bought by the Board for one thousand dollars, and that of the literary editor was given without compensation. Synod consented to the

publication with only the catechism and the sacramental forms appended. However, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments were printed on the usual "blank leaves," thus facilitating its use also as a church service book.

The Synod of 1880 declared, "the book is so excellent there cannot be a better!" In order to avoid competition with the Hymns of the Church the book was advertised chiefly for social worship; yet it made its way. The Board of Publication reports the sale of more copies of it than have been sold of any other authorized hymnbook of the Reformed Church in America. To meet the continuing demand, new plates were prepared at the beginning of the year 1902, without consulting the surviving editor.

This book was so well appreciated by an elder (who afterward returned to the denomination from which he had come) that he obtained from the Board the privilege of using its material in a smaller book which he proposed to prepare. That book when printed was found to have *most of the distinctive features of Christian Praise*, its hymns and tunes on opposite pages, its adaptations, one of the two tunes composed for it by the musical editor, etc., etc. The wealthy compiler had plates prepared, and then gave the whole to one of the great publishing societies of the country. The application to the Synod of 1888 for the endorsement of this rival to its own publications, as well as of one prepared by the Rev. Drs. Eddy and Hitchcock, was not granted by General Synod, which had never, as yet, allowed its churches to be exploited for the pecuniary benefit of individuals.

Another book named "Christian Praise" was issued by a New York firm which, on remonstrance, changed the title to "Songs of Christian Praise," this change being deemed sufficient to avoid the penalties of the copyright law of the United States.

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# The Christian Intelligencer

August 15, 1906.

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## "The Church Hymnary"

BY JOHN B. THOMPSON, D.D.

### VI.

MR. EDWIN A. BEDELL, organist of the Madison Avenue Reformed Church in Albany, had a laudable desire for a book of his own making, and prepared it with care. It was entitled "Lauda Zion," and was submitted in manuscript to a committee of General Synod, whose working members were the Rev. Drs. Edward A. Collier and William A. Clark, both well-known for their musical as well as literary taste and culture.

Five years before Dr. Collier had been chairman of a committee to consider some proposed action on church hymnody and had made a report showing that he held the views which underlie Christian praise. His report was adopted, declaring it "inexpedient that any action be taken at this time."

Dr. Clark was chairman of a committee to "examine and report on hymn-books," and to this committee Dr. Collier was added in 1889. These hymnologists gave many weeks to the most careful study of the book which, as it came into their hands, contained about 1,400 hymns. About 600 of these were excluded and about 200 others inserted. The name was changed to "The Church Hymnary," and the book was endorsed by the Synod of 1890.

It is a thoroughly modern book. While Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley furnish as usual more hymns than any other two authors, and there are 31 by James Montgomery, there are 35 by John Mason Neale and 30 by Horatius Bonar. Among American authors, 16 are credited to Ray Palmer, 11 to Thomas Hastings, and 3 to each of the persons whose names here follow: Leonard Bacon, William Cullen Bryant, Arthur Cleveland Coxe, George Washington

Doane, William Augustus Muhlenberg, Edwin Pond Parker, Samuel Francis Smith, Alexander Ramsay Thompson, and Denis Wortman. And the music is still more modern. As many as 49 tunes are credited to John Bacchus Dykes, 42 to Lowell Mason, 40 to Joseph Barnby, 27 to Arthur Seymour Sullivan, 17 to Edward John Hopkins, and as many to Uzziah C. Burnap, the musical editor of hymns of the church.

The arrangement is doctrinal, but practical, rather than theoretical. It begins with worship, its opening, offerings, and close; continues with the Scriptures; the Trinity; Christian life and experience; the church, its building, ministry, sacraments, and work, especially missions; times and seasons; special occasions; the last things; and closes with the usual doxologies, responses and chants.

The Synod of 1897 declared it "widely esteemed as the ideal manual of praise for the sanctuary." It has met with acceptance also in Congregational, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, and (it is understood) has proved highly remunerative. The twentieth century edition displaces a few unnecessary hymns and adds a few desirable ones. The tune called "St. Petersburg" bears the mark of the late Rev. Dr. Guido F. Verbeck, of Japan, who gave informa-

tion that the Russian bands always play it with the slur at the beginning of the last line of the alto, and his suggestion was at once adopted. In 1862 the Board of Publication issued the "Fulton Street Hymnbook for the use of Union Prayer Meetings, Sabbath Schools and Families." In 1881 a book of hymns and tunes, called "Spiritual Songs for Sunday Schools," prepared by the Rev. Dr. Charles S. Robinson, was submitted for the approval of Synod. After prolonged debate the matter was referred to the Board of Publication "with powers." This *quasi* approval encouraged similar applications, and the representatives of compilers and publishers year after year sought the *imprimatur* of Synod (in the words of a committee of investigation) for "one hymnbook and another, and again another, as wave succeeds wave." But Synod persistently refused to be



thus instrumental in the promotion of private gain until the year 1890.

In 1898 a committee was appointed "to consider the matter of Sunday School Hymnbooks." This committee consisted of the Rev. Dr. Collier, the Rev. Dr. Denis Wortman and the Rev. Benjamin E. Dickhaut.

After careful and prolonged consideration the committee decided to recommend the "Sunday School Hymnal" of the (German) Reformed Church in the United States, in which had been incorporated a considerable number of suggestions made by this committee. The book was well planned to lead up to, and not away from, "the service of song in the house of the Lord." It was approved by the General Synod of 1900, and the favor with which it was received showed a great improvement in popular taste, which has been still more elevated by this publication. "It rings with praise!"

The General Synod of 1792 approved the psalms and hymns in the French language prepared by Marot and Beza; and in German those published at Marburgh and Amsterdam and used in Germany, the Netherlands, and Pennsylvania.

In 1853 the Rev. John C. Guldin presented to Synod a petition "in relation to the preparation and publication of a book in the German language, which should contain also a metrical version of the Hebrew psalms. In compliance with this request Synod appointed a committee to choose and arrange the material for such a book and to submit it, when ready, to another committee consisting of the Rev. Drs. Thomas De Witt, William Henry Campbell, and John Proudfit, whose approval should be the warrant to have it "printed without delay." The committee to prepare the book consisted of the Rev. John C. Guldin, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Berg, and the elder Berky, though Dr. Berg was not able to take part in the work, which devolved almost entirely upon the competent and excellent chairman (who must really have been engaged in it for a long time before the application to Synod). It was published in 1854 with the title, "Die Psalmen Davids, nebst einer Sammlung

geistlicher Lieder, für oeffentlichen und Privat-Gottesdienst" (*The Psalms of David, with a Collection of Spiritual Songs, for public and private worship*).

It was used in all the German-speaking churches of the denomination and was adopted also by the Presbyterian Church in the United States. It is an excellent book, and the preface is a valuable contribution to hymnology. It includes admirable "remarks upon the music" by the musical editor, Dr. C. W. Lange, who was the organist of the Evangelical Mission Church in New York.

The Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America has published two hymn and tune books in the German language. The first, issued in 1860, was called the "Evangelische Kinder-harfe für Christliche Schulen" (*Children's Harp for Christian Schools*). The second, issued in 1884, was called "Evangelischer Liederkranz: für kirche, schule und haus" (*A Wreath of Songs for church, school and house*). In 1890 Synod resolved that "the German congregations of the Church be permitted to use in their church services the hymnbook published by the German Reformed Church in the United States."

No attempt has ever been made by the General Synod to control the use of hymns in the churches of the denomination still speaking the Dutch language.



# The Christian Intelligencer

September 18, 1907.

**The Rev. John B. Thompson, D.D.**

BY E. TANJORE CORWIN, D.D.

**A**NOTHER of our standard-bearers has fallen, but at a ripe old age. Rev. Dr. Thompson, so well known in the assemblies and institutions of our Church, laid aside his earthly armor on September 4th. He was born in 1830, and if he had lived until October 14th he would have been seventy-seven years old. The oldest child of his parents, of large size and vigorous physique, he early developed a fondness for study, and determined to take a college course. His father was the Hon. Joseph Thompson, who, after being for fifteen years judge of the Hunterdon county court, was, for another fifteen years, judge of the Somerset county court. Dr. Thompson's early manhood was devoted to the affairs of practical life, and the business knowledge thus acquired, fitted him to be a sympathetic counselor and friend of youth during the whole of his ministry. He belongs to a family of teachers, and never ceased to be a helper of the young in their endeavors for the acquirement of knowledge.

He prepared for college under the instruction of his uncle, Rev. William J. Thompson, long known as Tutor Thompson, who was rector of the New Brunswick Grammar School from 1846-1862. The nephew became an assistant teacher in the grammar school when only fifteen years of age, and at sixteen he became a public school teacher. At nineteen he entered the Junior Class at Rutgers College, graduating in 1851. He afterward had charge, first of a classical school; then of all the schools in Somerville; then of a classical school in Flemington, and afterward was teacher of natural sciences in the Trenton Academy.

For three years he was the agent of the New Jersey State Teachers' Association, holding teachers' institutes

and lecturing on education. He took a deep interest in the movement to establish public libraries throughout the state. In his travels he advocated the establishment of a normal school for the training of teachers. He entered the Theological Seminary in 1855, and graduated in 1858.

The knowledge of men and affairs thus obtained facilitated his subsequent work as a minister of the Gospel. It qualified him also for services as a member of the Board of Education, and as an explorer for the Board of Domestic Missions, by which he was sent out to select suitable locations for churches in the West. Declining to receive even his traveling expenses, he offered himself to undertake the work at Omaha, where the terminus of the Pacific Railroad had just been fixed; but more conservative counsels prevailed.

It was his custom in the earlier part of his ministry to give the morning to his study, the afternoon to his parish, and the evening to his family. Careful economy of time enabled him to pursue also his favorite literary studies, of which the Church reaped the benefit when it made him chairman of the Committee to provide Hymn Books for public and social worship. He was also a member of one of the former committees on the revision of the Liturgy, and one of the preachers of the series of Centennial Discourses in 1876. In this discourse he demonstrated the *raison d'être* of the Church of his fathers. He emphasized its importance as a Church with a voluntary Liturgy, and with Doctrinal Standards whose keynote was Union with Christ.

After about a dozen years of service in three successive charges, namely, seven years at Metuchen, three years at Tarrytown, and three years at Saugerties, he went to Europe, and there cast in his lot with the recently organized *Chiesa Libera Italiana*, or The Evangelical Church of Italy, of which the famous orator, Alessandro Gavazzi, was the principal evangelist. With him he twice made the tour of the American churches, north, south, east and west. Their efforts during two summer vacations secured for the work in Italy \$50,000.

Returning to America, he accepted the call to the Church of Peekskill in 1873. Finding the nearby church of Cort-



landtown, or Montrose, on the point of extinction, he took the pastoral charge of that also, and did not forsake it until he had secured for it a pastor and provided for his salary.

In 1874 he was invited by the Board of Foreign Missions to become a theological professor in Japan, but he declined the offer. He then accepted the call to Catskill, where his longest and most effective work was done. Here he remained for ten years. This charge he resigned to accept that of the Presbyterian Church adjoining the grounds of the University of California, at Berkeley in that State. The church was then small and feeble, and the proffered salary much less than that to which he had been accustomed; but the opportunity for usefulness seemed wider, and was heartily embraced. And he did not disappoint the expectation. While serving this Berkeley church he also became editor of *The Occident*, the Presbyterian paper of the Pacific Coast, and also served as a professor in the Theological Seminary of San Francisco.

Again overworked, another season of rest from intellectual labor was imperatively ordered by physicians. He again visited Italy. A year later he returned to California and spent a year in laying out and establishing the "Presbyterian Summer Resort," called "Inverness," he giving this place its name.

His health being now restored, he came back to his native New Jersey, and supplied, in succession, three of the churches of Trenton during the years 1890 and 1891, when he took the pastoral charge of the newly established church of Highland Park, across the Raritan from New Brunswick, where he spent five years of pastoral work, his final pastoral charge, resigning there in 1896.

He then removed to Trenton and devoted himself to literary and historical pursuits. Making original researches there in the archives of the State he rescued not a few important facts from oblivion which were worked up in magazine articles by himself or others.

His publications have been numerous in the shape of addresses, sermons, magazine articles, chiefly in the religious press. A list of them down to 1902 may be seen in the Manual of the Reformed Church. The Hymn Books which he issued in connection with Rev. Drs. A.

G. Vermilye and Alexander R. Thompson have had an unusually large circulation, and are yet in demand after more than thirty years. His Discourse in the volume styled "Centennial Discourses," 1876, entitled "The Immovable Attachment of the Reformed Church in America to its own Heirlooms of Faith and Order," with its copious

notes, was a masterpiece of information and interest, and is a standard on its subject. He was also a voluminous writer in his prime, not only in his own Church paper, THE CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER, but also in *The Sower*, *The Advance*, *The Interior*, *The Christian Union*, *The Christian at Work*, *The New York Observer*, *The New York Evangelist*, *The Presbyterian*, *The Sunday School Times*, etc.

His pamphlet on "The Evolution of the American College, 1894," is especially valuable. He spent about a year in its preparation. His article styled "The Middle of the Century"—the nineteenth century, in Dr. David Murray's "History of Education in New Jersey," 1899, is a masterly and exhaustive article on the development of the educational system in our State. His articles in papers and magazines would be numbered by hundreds.

Said Dr. David Cole concerning Dr. Thompson at the bi-centennial of the Tarrytown Church: "He was graduated in succession from both our New Brunswick institutions and was licensed to our ministry in 1858, having done grand service for almost a decade before he began his seminary course in teaching and in general educational work in New Jersey. Coming of a sturdy stock, he enjoys the sound mind in the sound body. And having received the best instructional advantages, he represents the mind of naturally quick and keen perceptive power, cultured and refined through direct study, and through years of intercourse with leading scholars both at home and abroad, and capable of and delighting in the closest analytical thinking. He has held several of our own pulpits. He is distinguished as a minutely accurate scholar, an active and voluminous author, and one of the foremost men in our Reformed Church ministry."



#### THE FUNERAL.

The funeral took place on Saturday, September 7th, in the Readington Church. The pastor, Rev. B. V. D. Wyckoff, conducted the funeral services, giving a very excellent account of the general activities of Dr. Thompson through his long ministry of forty-nine years. Rev. Dr. Corwin followed in an address, referring to their long-continued friendship and some of the scholarly habits of Dr. Thompson; of the Hymn Book he had prepared in connection with others, and which had been so largely circulated in the Church. A number of clergymen were present. Rev. Dr. Lefevre conducted the devotional exercises, and the Rev. Dr. Wilson Phraner performed the committal service.

#### TRIBUTE OF THE CHURCH OF CATSKILL, N. Y.

The late Rev. John Bodine Thompson, D.D., was pastor of the Catskill Reformed Church from 1874 to 1884. During that period he endeared himself to the church and the community by his sturdy Christian character and his integrity both as man and as minister. His ability as a scholar, and especially his success as a teacher of Biblical truth, are unsurpassed in the history of this church.

In after years, it was here that he loved to come when seeking rest and recreation in the vacation season. There are many in Catskill with whom his acquaintance and friendship were continued until the last. His interest in this church and his many kindnesses to her ministers and members, long after he had ceased to be officially connected with the organization, have made his memory here doubly blessed. While we mourn with Dr. Thompson's family in their deep affliction, yet we wish hereby to record our gratitude to God for the benefits we have received through His servant. It is our prayer that his example of noble and self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of Christ may remain with us in the hallowed memory of our friend and former pastor.

Be it resolved that this expression of our love and affection for Dr. Thompson be published in THE CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER and recorded on the minutes of Consistory; and that a copy be sent to his family.

(Signed) William Van Orden, John D. Ahreet, Amadee Raynor, Charles H. Van Orden, Charles Ernst, William Palmatier, Thomas Bell, John Fiero, W. Irving Jennings, George C. Fox, Joseph Malcolm, Frederick A. Stahl, Irving H. Berg.

Catskill, N. Y., September 10, 1907.

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## An Appreciation

BY THE REV. JOHN BROWNLEE VOORHEES

THE INTELLIGENCER of September 11th contained a brief notice of the death of Dr. Thompson on September 4th. The writer is not competent to pay a worthy tribute to his life and character, his services to learning and scholarship, but out of a great indebtedness for favors which cannot be repaid he extends this appreciation.

To have known Dr. Thompson was to have had acquaintance with one who before all else was a great scholar, a great Christian scholar. Truth was a consuming passion. With Pascal he held, "The first of all Christian truths is that truth shall be loved above all." Never at truth's shrine knelt a more devoted disciple, "strong in will to strive, to seek, to find." The foundations of his learning were laid in a generation uncursed by the mania of specialization. Hence his scholarship had the note of catholicity, and his preaching an opulent fullness like the flow of the full-banked stream. His sermons never trickled, for the river was fed from many springs. Philosophy, history, litera-

ture, science, all were drawn upon, and from their depths. To him there were no closed rooms in the temple of wisdom. He knocked at every door, and each door opened at his touch. Nature endowed him richly for the student life. A single reading of a book threshed the grain from the chaff and what was good was stored in a marvelous memory, to be drawn upon at need.

His scholarship also had the note of originality. Of how few men can it truthfully be said, "they do their own thinking"? Most prefer their thought in predigested form—warranted not to injure the most delicate constitution. But Dr. Thompson's philosophy and theology bore no trade-mark.

They were his own, forged by his own hand and beaten into shape on his own mental anvil. He accepted, for example, the theory of evolution at a time when most theologians had for it only fear and detestation. He thought through the problems it presented and rejoiced in the contributions which it made to our knowledge of God's workings. It made for a larger faith, that while "earth changes, the soul and God stand sure."

From his originality came that most beautiful and inspiring characteristic of his thinking; it ever faced the future. Few possessed his knowledge of the past, none were less wedded to the past. Few appreciated more highly the contributions of the past, none believed more profoundly in the contributions of the future. He did not despise the ancient land-marks, but he did not forget that ancient land-marks stand only for the circumscribed and already surveyed. His reverence for the past is indicated by his centennial discourse, "The Attachment of the Reformed Church to its Own Heirlooms of Faith and Order"; his confidence in the future is revealed by his address before the New York Ministerial Association on "Progress in Theology." But this facing of the future was not an intellectual characteristic only; everything which stood for progress had his sympathy. No forward movement ever failed to enlist his enthusiastic support.

It is possible, however, for scholarship to degenerate into scholasticism; and learning in theology does not always imply depth of spiritual life. But those who were privileged to have Dr. Thompson as their preacher soon learned that he drew water from the deep wells of a personal experience in the things of faith. Side by side with the vast learning was a rich vein of mysticism, qualifying him to interpret the life of the spirit as they only are able who can say, "I have felt." It was characteristic that his last sermon before the General Synod should be on the work of the spirit, "The Other Paraclete." And those who heard knew not which to admire the more, the philosophic grasp of the first part of the discourse, or the devotional character of the latter.

Dr. Thompson's was a strong personality, intense in its likes and dislikes. He had sympathy with all earnest en-

deavor, however simple and humble. Those who tried and those who needed ever found a friend in him. But for all self-seeking and pretense he had an unmasked contempt. Shallowness of every sort he loathed, in particular superficiality of scholarship. Not many knew him on terms of personal intimacy, for his heart was not on his sleeve and the latch string did not hang out for every passer-by. But the few to whom the door was opened were rich in a friendship of a great mind and a great heart. And their present sorrow is the measure of the greatness of their loss.

1176 Woody Crest avenue, New York City.

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above,"

Seem'd to uphold "*Church Militant*" with pure bands  
of love!

Men say, from "*Natural causes*" we view th' ethereal  
sight:

Christians know, at *God's command* th' electric sparks  
ignite:

Like—as when the "*HOLY CHILD*" in "*Bethlehem*"  
was born—

"A *STAR* before *wise men* went," of an uncommon form:

"It" seem'd a brilliant "*METEOR*" coursing through  
the air,

Sent by the *GREAT CREATOR*:—*Philosophers!* beware—

"The Great Meteor," of Tuesday Nov. 12th 1861, was seen as described by the Spectator—over the trees in the N.E. close to the House, called, Mylor Vicarage, Cornwall.

One spectator, counted "*seven stars*" in a *line*, on the back of the *cone*.

"It is supposed to have fallen from the head of the *Constellation Draco*."









